

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 061328Z FEB 76

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1194

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 064

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: SUSPICIONS OF GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS
INITIATIVES

REF: BELFAST 62

1. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AREA CAME UNDER FIRE FROM OPPOSITE ENDS OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM FEB.5. IN SPEECH TO UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION (UUUC) RALLY AT DUNGANNON REVEREND IAN PAISLEY CHARGED THAT NEW TEAM OF FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS SECONDED TO NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE HAD BEEN SET UP IN ASSOCIATION WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE TO SPEARHEAD CAMPAIGN OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AGAINST LOYALISTS HERE. ACCORDING TO PAISLEY, NEW TEAM EXCLUDES NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVANTS AND ITS PURPOSE IS PARALLEL TO INTELLIGENCE TEAM ESTABLISHED BY ARMY AND NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE AGAINST IRA AT BEGINNING OF CAMPAIGN. PAISLEY IN BBC RADIO INTERVIEW SAID PROPAGANDA ROLE IS INTENDED TO DISCREDIT "SECOND ECHELON" OF LOYALISTS BUT HE REFUSED IDENTIFY INDIVIDUALS TARGETED. IN RARE PUBLIC REBUTTAL, SECRETARY OF STATE MERLYN REES IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID IN RELATION UNCLASSIFIED

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TO DISCREDITING LOYALISTS "... DR. PAISLEY NEEDS NO HELP

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE OR ANYONE ELSE ON THIS ACCOUNT
BUT HE HAS EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE THIS MATTER IN
THE HOUSE IF HE SO WISHES."

2. ON OTHER SIDE MICHAEL CANAVAN CONVENTION MEMBER FROM
LONDONDERRY FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP)
CHARGED GOVERNMENT WITH DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO EMPHASIZE
THAT VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND CAME FROM ONE SOURCE
AND WITH IGNORING IT FROM THE OTHER. CANAVAN CITED NEWSPAPER
ADS CONDEMNING MANIPULATION OF YOUTH IN VIOLENCE BUT
IMPLYING ONLY PROVISIONAL IRA WAS RESPONSIBLE WHEN IT KNOWN
PARAMILITARY GROUPS FROM MAJORITY TRADITION CORRUPTED YOUTH
IN SAME WAY. HE ALSO CRITICIZED ADS RECRUITING FOR
ULSTER DEFENSE REGIMENT WHICH IMPLIED ONLY NEEDS FOR
DEFENSE WERE IN CROSSMAGLEN AREA. HE CITED ALSO SPEECHES
BY STANLEY ORME IN UNITED STATES IN WHICH INFORMATION ABOUT
ARMS AND AMMUNITION WAS PROVIDED FOR ONLY ONE OF SECTARIAN
MURDER ORGANIZATIONS.

3. THERE NOTICEABLE NEW EMPHASIS ON OVERT PR PART
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE (REFTEL). NORTHERN IRELAND PRESS
SERVICE RECENTLY REORGANIZED AND DIVIDED. FORMER DIRECTOR
(TOM ROBERTS) PUT IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION AND
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION TO PUBLIC ON
ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SUCH AS HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENT. NEW BRANCH FOR POLITICAL AND SECURITY INFORMATION
ESTABLISHED IN SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE UNDER DIRECTION
FORMER PRESS DEPUTY DAVID GILLILAND. HOWEVER GILLILAND IS
ULSTERMAN AND AS FAR AS KNOWN FOREIGN OFFICE ADVISORS IN
NORTHERN IRELAND DO NOT HAVE DIRECT PUBLIC INFORMATION ROLE.

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